

Millennials and The Media: American and British Broadcast News

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

By

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Abstract

Despite the criticism of the news media by politicians and the media itself, the broadcast news media is not going anywhere any time soon. American and British broadcast news provide stark contrast, and in an ever-shrinking world, millennials have broad outlooks on the media climate today. The analysis of the BBC compared to American outlets including NBC, ABC, CBS, MSNBC, Fox News, and CNN illustrates how college students understand the current state of the media and recognize bias in their news sources.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Phil Bremen for advising me for this project. He helped me figure out how to better explain what I wanted to say and pushed me to think critically and defend my convictions.

This project would not have been possible without the Rinker Center for International Programs and Keele University. Studying abroad in the United Kingdom not only helped me with my thesis but also prepared me for life.

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Process Analysis

As I was preparing to study abroad in England this past spring semester, I began thinking about how the news media is viewed differently in the United States and the United Kingdom. At Keele University in England, I took classes focusing on media and British culture. A requirement for my British cultural studies class was to complete an area studies project, which focused on an aspect of British culture. With my thesis in mind, I chose to focus my project on the uniquely British institution that is the BBC.

I think it is also very important to keep in mind the time in which I was studying abroad. I left the United States on Jan. 17, 2017, three days before President Trump took the oath of office and during a lot of Brexit chaos in the United Kingdom. Needless to say, this was a time when a lot of people in the United States and United Kingdom were paying attention to their own and each other's national news.

This project hasn't always been easy. With a shortened time frame to work on this project due to being abroad, there have been stressful moments and things that I wish I would have done differently. At first, I wanted to have a more open-ended survey, but after consulting with the IRB, I found that if I restructured the survey, IRB approval would not be necessary. This I did, and it resulted in more easily interpretable data. The most difficult part about my survey was getting it to the audience that I was trying to reach. As a journalism major myself, the majority of classes I have taken and organizations I have been in were with other journalism majors. However, having journalism majors respond to my survey would have given me much different results as it would have been more of a "self-evaluation."

I think the most interesting thing I have learned throughout this process is that American and British college students do have similar general ideas about the BBC and American news media. It really shows how small the world has become because of things like the internet and social media.

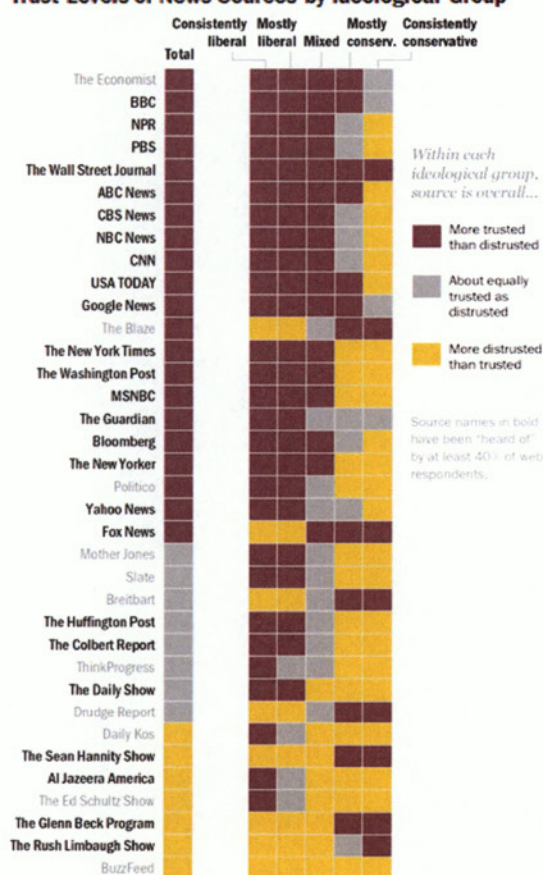
Millennials and The Media: American and British Broadcast News

If you type the word “news” into Google, the first six websites that show up are Fox News, Google News, the BBC, CNN, ABC News, and NPR, and all of these, aside from Google News, are national and world broadcast news outlets. Within these top six hits are also the most trusted network and cable¹ news outlets (Mitchell et al., 2014).

Aside from the obvious difference - the BBC being a British news outlet - the starkest contrast is in the way that these outlets operate. The BBC is an independently run institution of the British government, and its terms of operation along with its mission, public purposes, activities, and duties are granted to by its Royal Charter, which was recently renewed at the end of 2016 (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2016). The institution receives its funding through the license fee paid by British citizens (bbc.co.uk, 2017). American news networks, however, are commercially funded and rely on advertising and ratings in order to stay in business.

In the United States, the First Amendment ensures the freedom of the press, which allows the media to keep the government in check. A 2016 survey conducted by Pew Research found that 75 percent of Americans think that news organizations are doing their job of keeping political leaders in check, but just over a year later, that number dropped to 70 percent (Barthel and Mitchell, 2017).

Trust Levels of News Sources by Ideological Group



American Trends Panel (wave 1). Survey conducted March 19-April 29, 2014, Q21a-21b. Based on web respondents. Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see about the survey). Grouping of outlets is determined by whether the percent who trust each source is significantly different from the percent who distrust each source. Outlets are then ranked by the proportion of those who trust more than distrust each.

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¹ For the purposes of this thesis, cable and network news will be referred to as one group

While the American “way” of news broadcasting is different than that of the BBC, Americans trust the British outlet more and see it as less biased than American news networks.²

Impartiality of the BBC based on average response on a scale from 1 (completely biased) to 10 (completely unbiased)



Impartiality of American network news based on average response on a scale from 1 (completely biased) to 10 (completely unbiased)

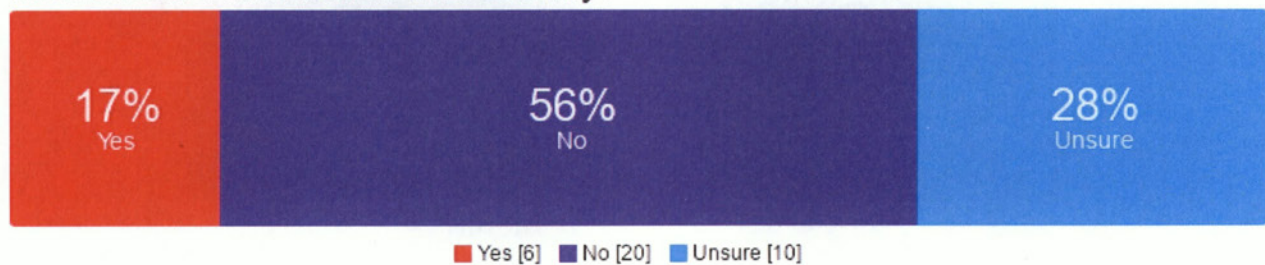


However, those surveyed were not as keen on applying the operating system of the BBC to American news media. In a survey conducted with students at Ball State University³, students rated the BBC as more impartial than American news networks. They were not told that the question related to the BBC, when asked about their thoughts about how the BBC operates, and most responded either against or skeptically towards a government institution news outlet.

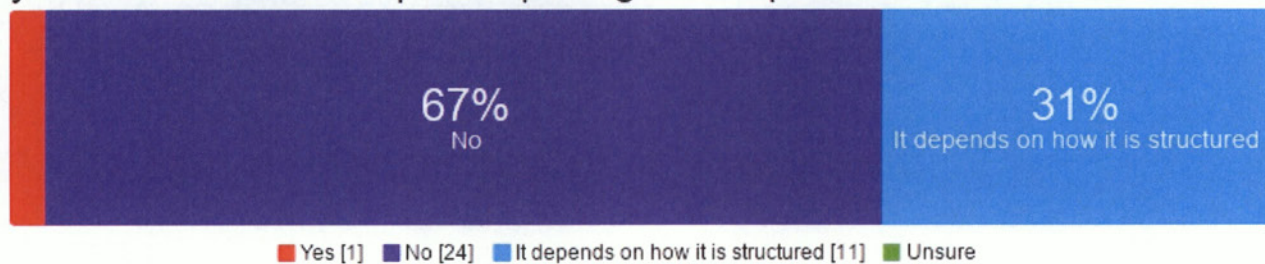
² Data collected from a survey of Ball State University students from Nov. 30 - Dec. 7, 2017

³ Students studying journalism were asked not to participate in the survey

Q3 - Would you favor having the U.S. government, rather than advertisers, fund a news network in this country?

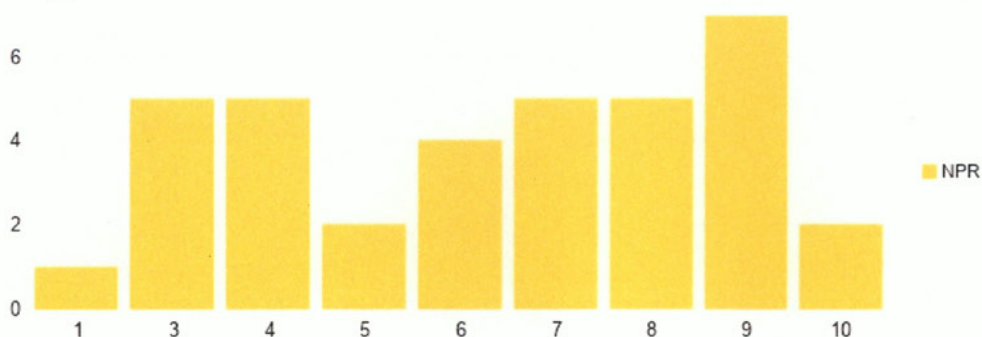


Q4 - If the U.S. government funded a news network in this country, would you be inclined to accept its reporting as independent and unbiased?

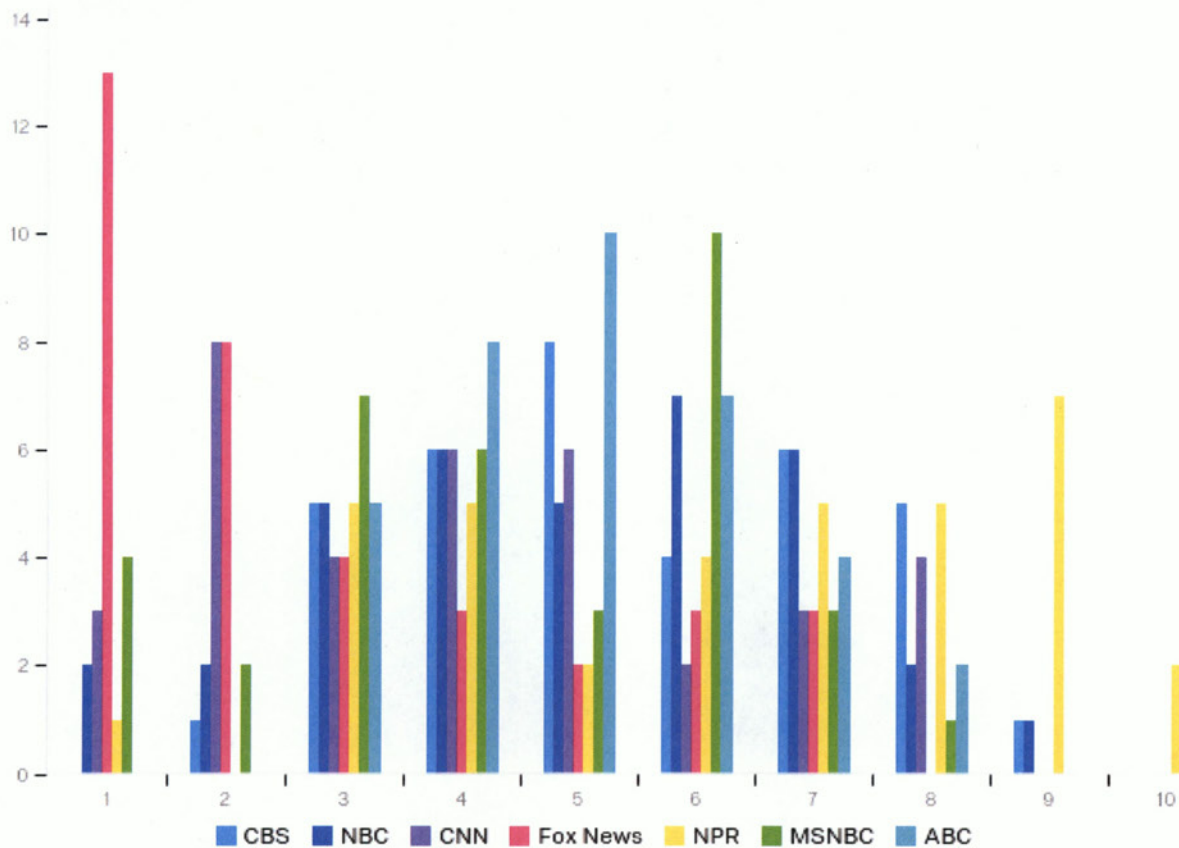


One of the most similar American news outlets to the BBC, although it still cannot be considered the American version of the BBC, is NPR. National Public Radio is publicly funded (NPR.org, 2017). Like the BBC it is generally viewed as being less biased; however, respondents rated NPR as low as 1, saying it was completely biased, to 10, completely unbiased⁴.

Q7_5 - NPR



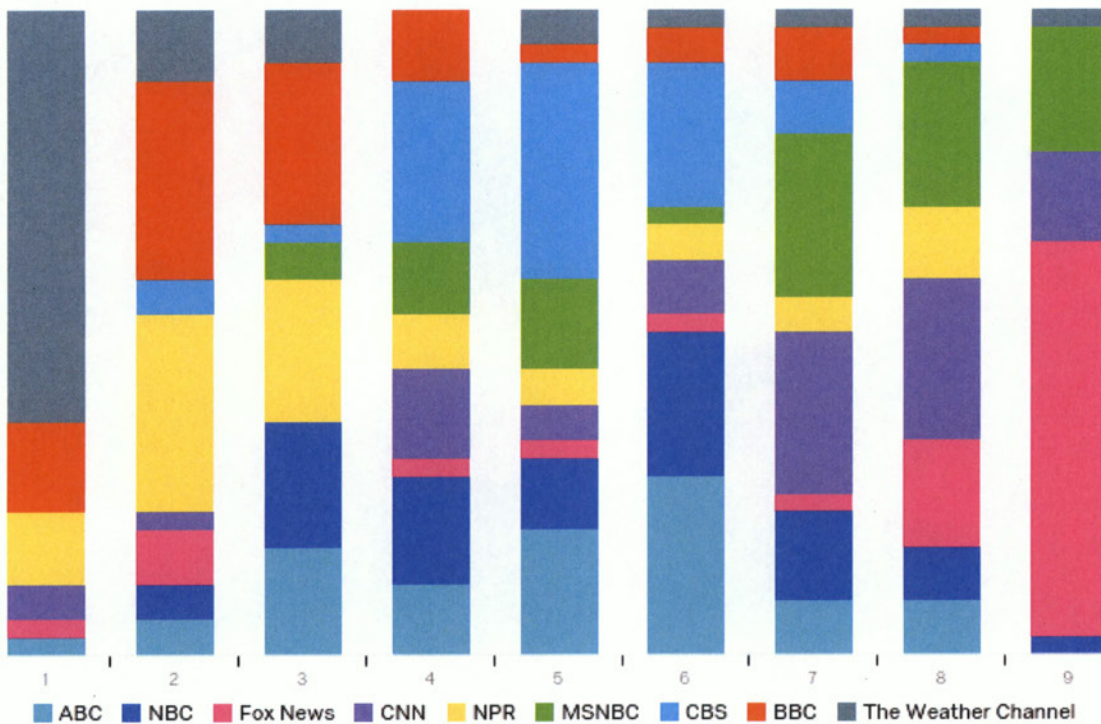
⁴ Surveys containing conflicting responses between bias rating and ranking have been omitted in order to maintain accuracy



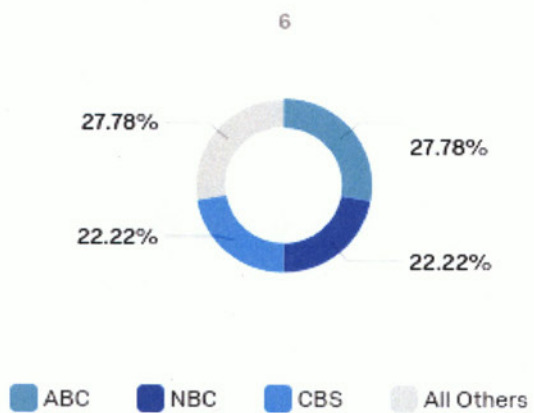
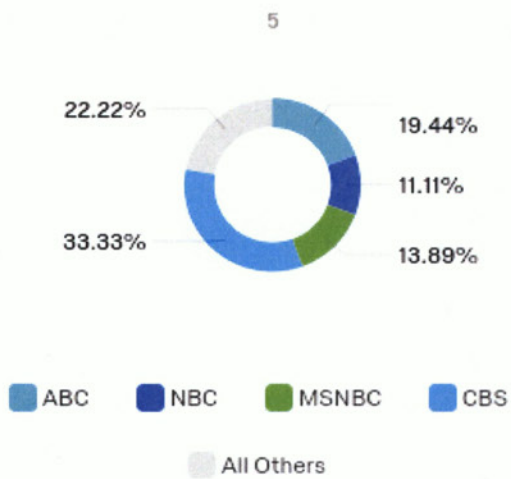
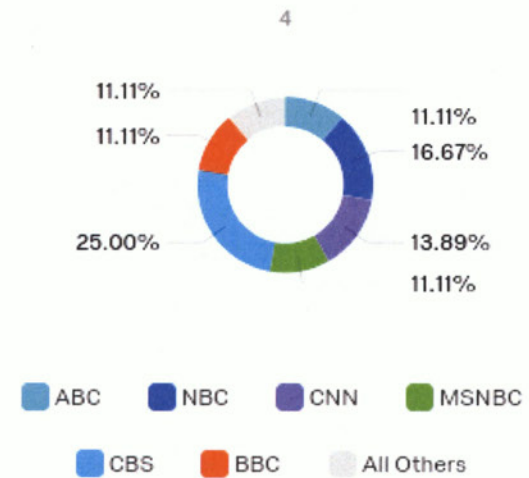
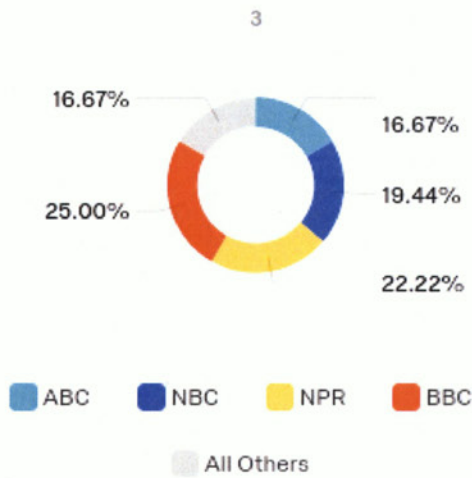
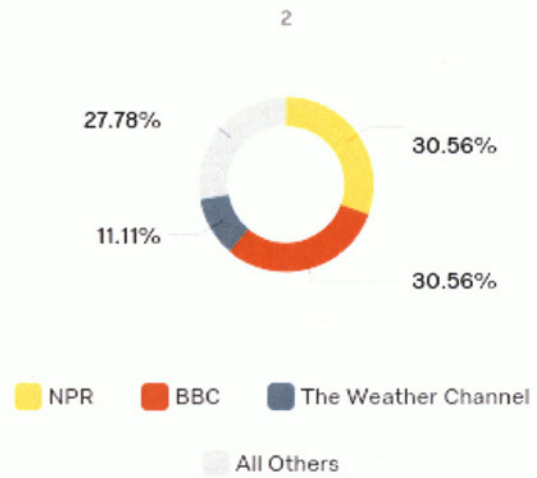
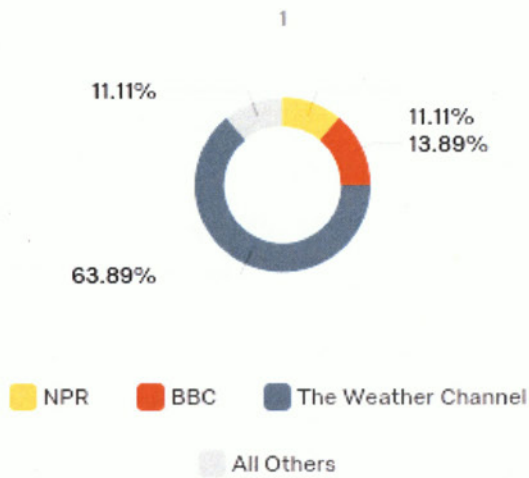
While other outlets were rated more consistently, NPR had the most high-rating responses.

Similarly, NPR was ranked near the top of the least biased broadcast news outlets, and was only eclipsed by the BBC and The Weather Channel, which was added to provide a balance and create a less politically-focus ranking system.

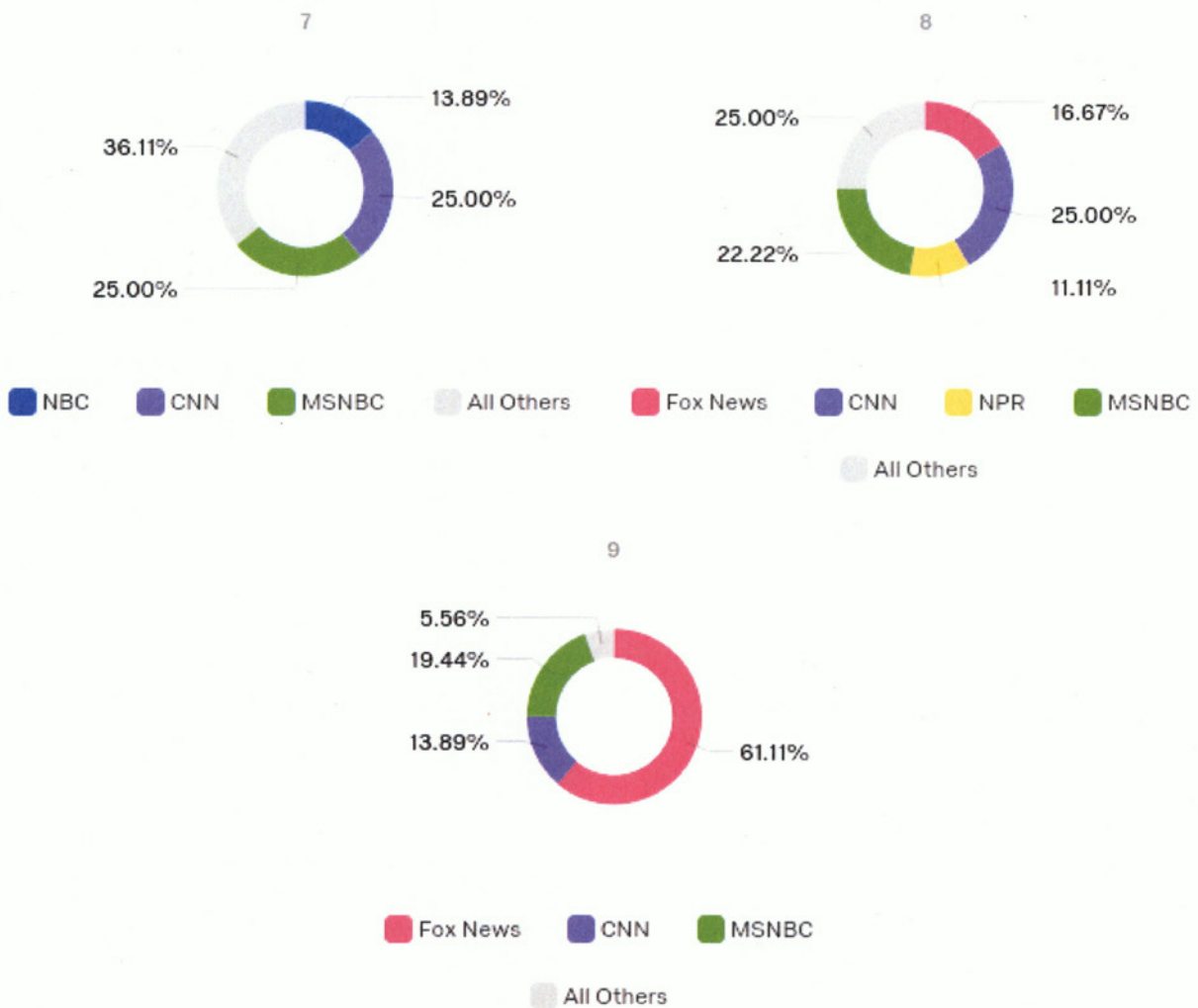
Q9 - Rank these news outlets from least biased to most biased, with 1 being the...



Figures atop each pie chart indicates its rank order by percentage of responses



News outlets such as NBC, ABC, and CBS made up more of the middle ground, while students ranked CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News towards the bottom.



This was consistent with the data from Pew Research Center.

Appendix

Works Cited

Barthel, M. and Mitchell, A. (2017). Democrats, Republicans now split on support for watchdog role. [online] Pew Research Center's Journalism Project. Available at: <http://www.journalism.org/2017/05/10/democrats-republicans-now-split-on-support-for-watchdog-role/> [Accessed 13 Dec. 2017].

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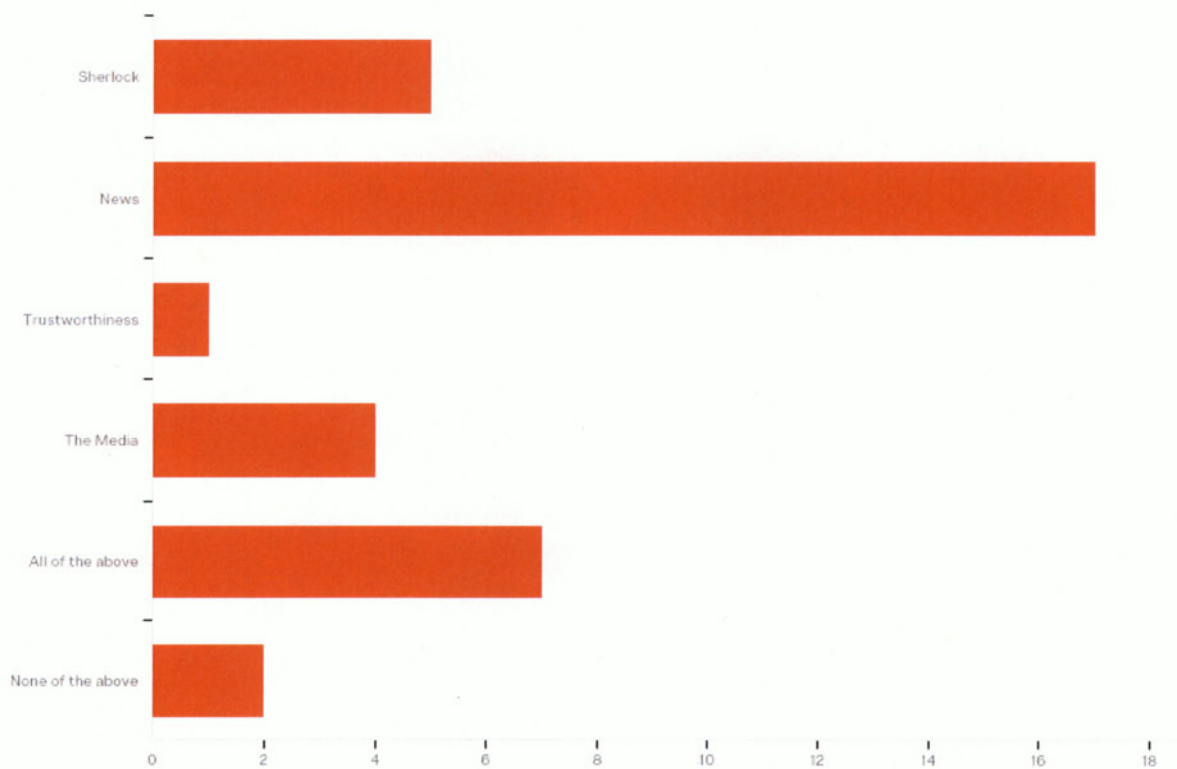
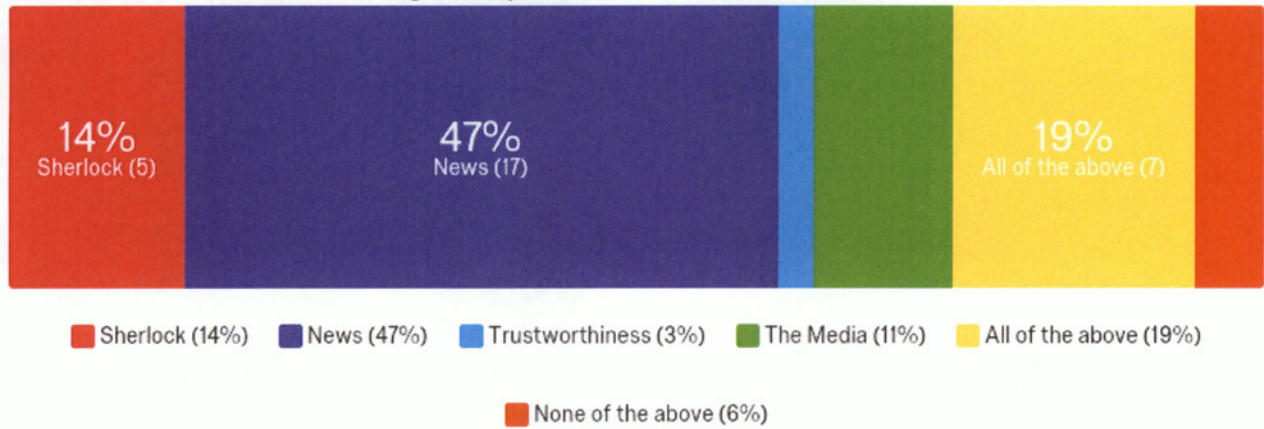
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2016). ROYAL CHARTER FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION. London, U.K.: Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, pp.1-41.

Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., Kiley, J. and Matsa, K. (2014). Political Polarization & Media Habits. [online] Pew Research Center's Journalism Project. Available at: <http://www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/> [Accessed 13 Dec. 2017].

NPR.org. (2017). Overview And History. [online] Available at: <https://www.npr.org/about-npr/192827079/overview-and-history> [Accessed 13 Dec. 2017].

Full Survey Report⁵

Q1 - What is the main thing that you associate with the BBC?

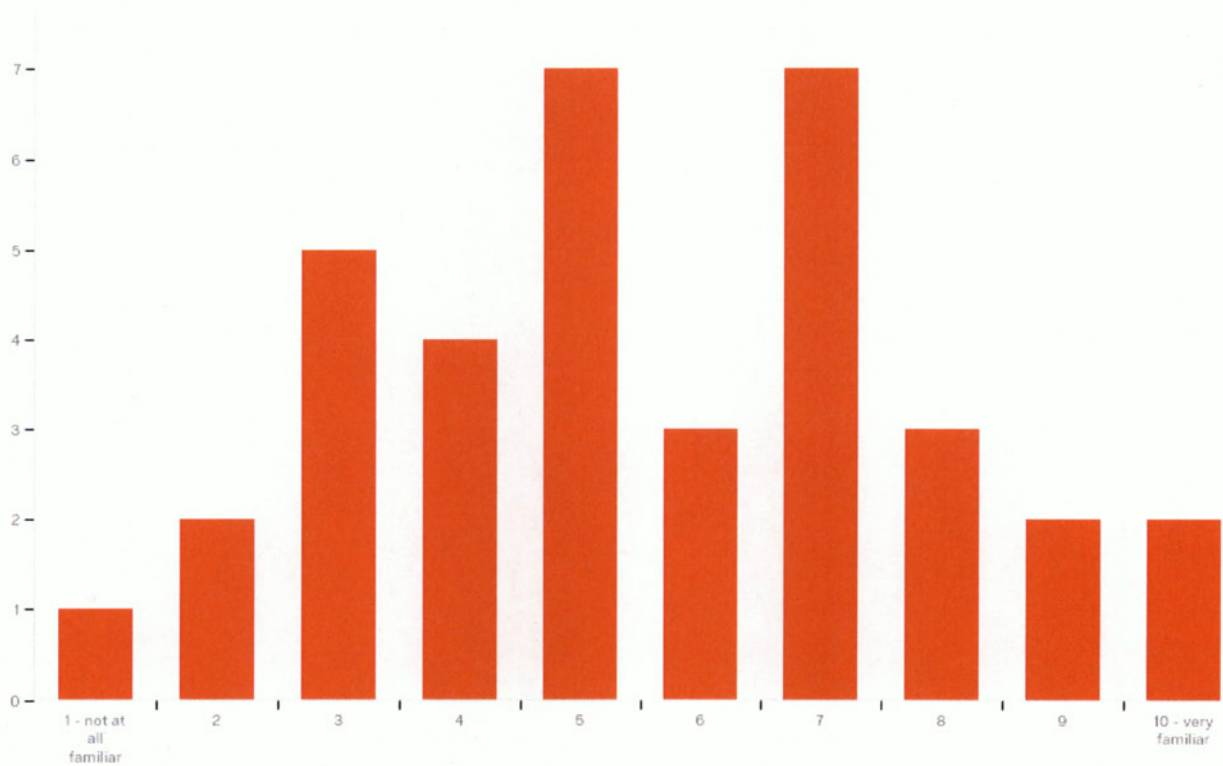


⁵ Additional 10 responses omitted from analysis due to surveys containing conflicting responses that would have made a false impact on results

Q1 - What is the main thing that you associate with the BBC?

Answer	%	Count
Sherlock	13.89%	5
News	47.22%	17
Trustworthiness	2.78%	1
The Media	11.11%	4
All of the above	19.44%	7
None of the above	5.56%	2
Total	100%	36

Q2 - On a scale of 1-10, how familiar are you with the BBC?



Respondents' average familiarity with the BBC on a scale of 1 (not at all familiar) - 10 (very familiar)



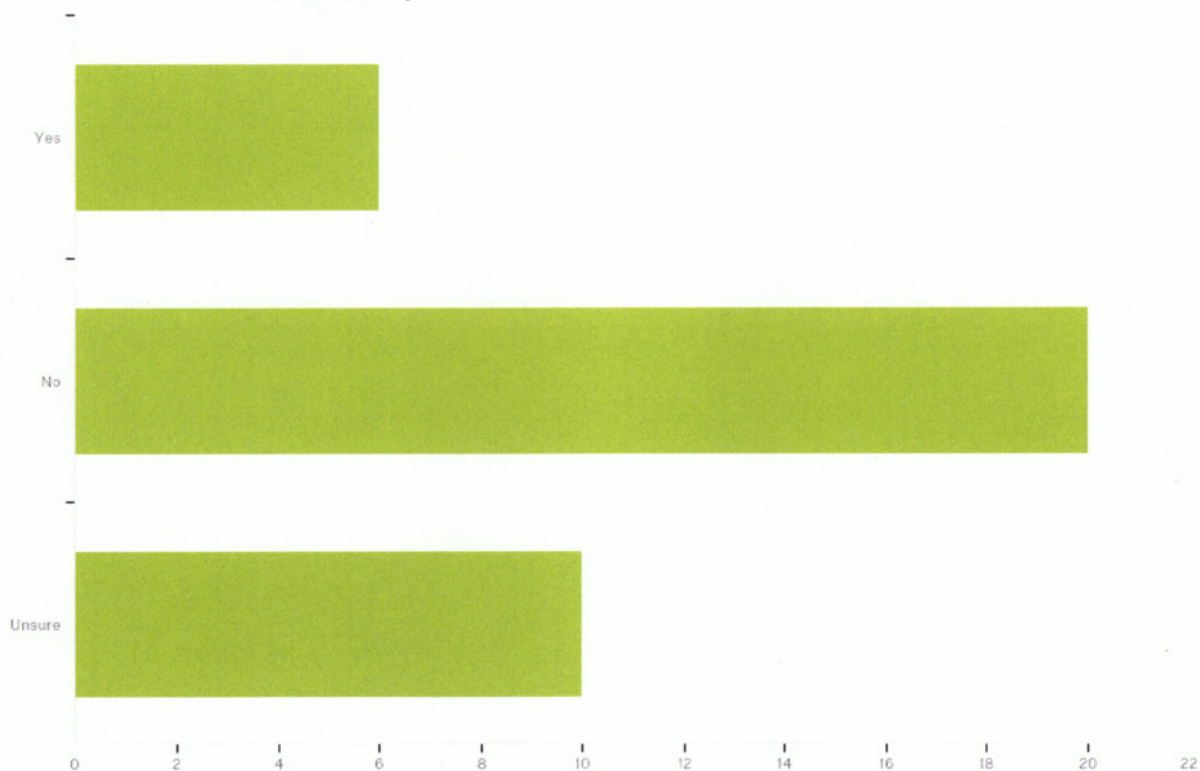
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
On a scale of 1-10, how familiar are you with the BBC?	1.00	10.00	5.56	2.28	5.19

Q3 - Would you favor having the U.S. government, rather than advertisers, fund a news network in this country?



Yes (6) No (20) Unsure (10)

Q3 - Would you favor having the U.S. government, rather than advertisers, fund a news network in this country?

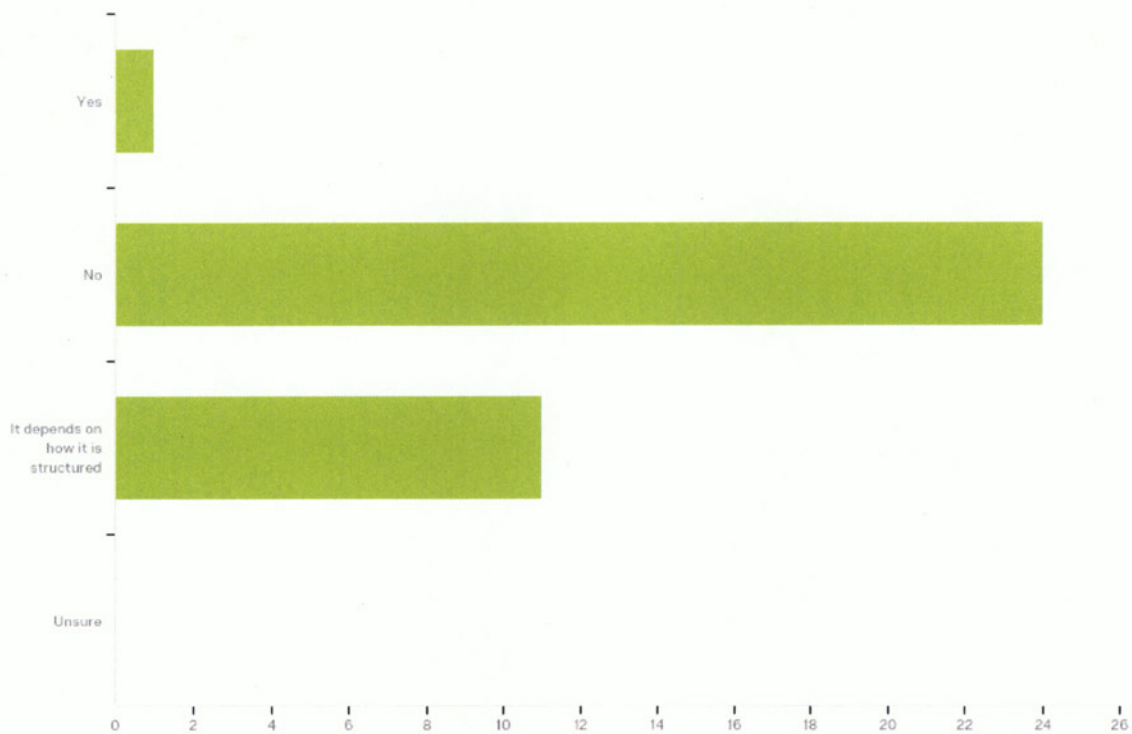


Answer	%	Count
Yes	16.67%	6
No	55.56%	20
Unsure	27.78%	10
Total	100%	36

Q4 - If the U.S. government funded a news network in this country, would you be inclined to accept its reporting as independent and unbiased?



Yes (3%) No (67%) It depends on how it is structured (31%) Unsure (0%)

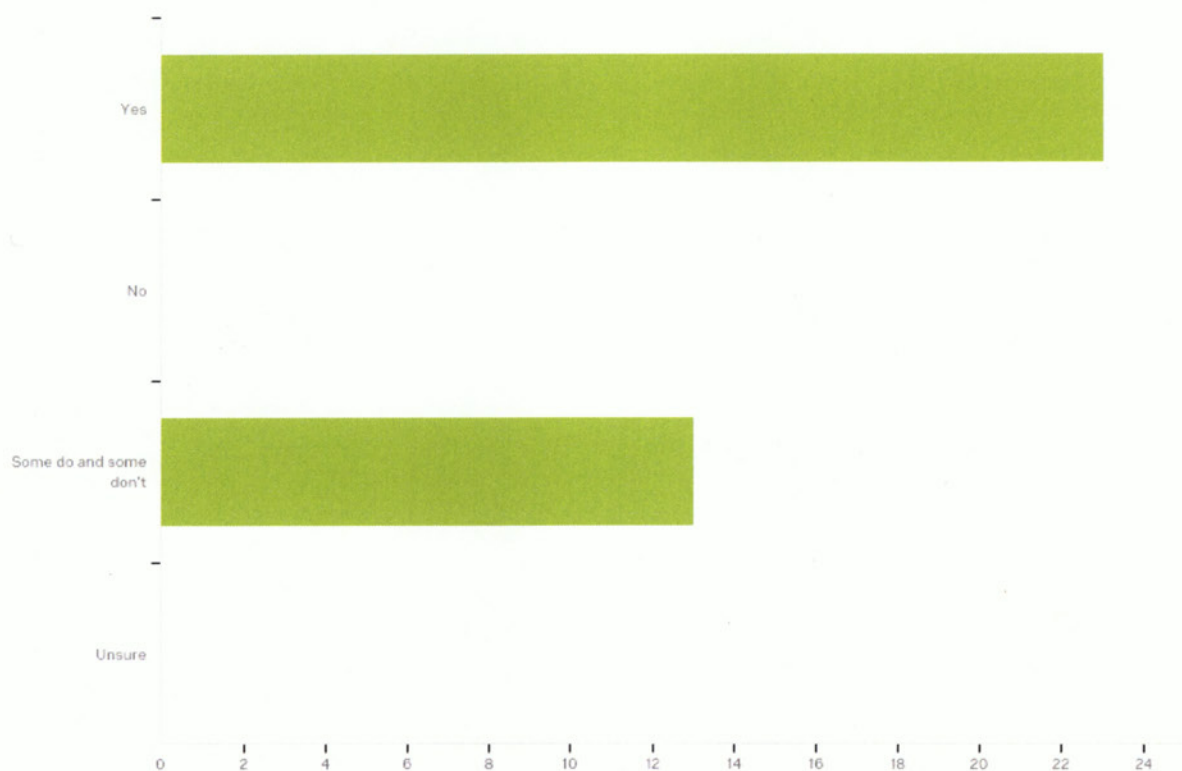


Answer	%	Count
Yes	2.78%	1
No	66.67%	24
It depends on how it is structured	30.56%	11
Unsure	0.00%	0
Total	100%	36

Q5 - Do American news networks sensationalize the news?



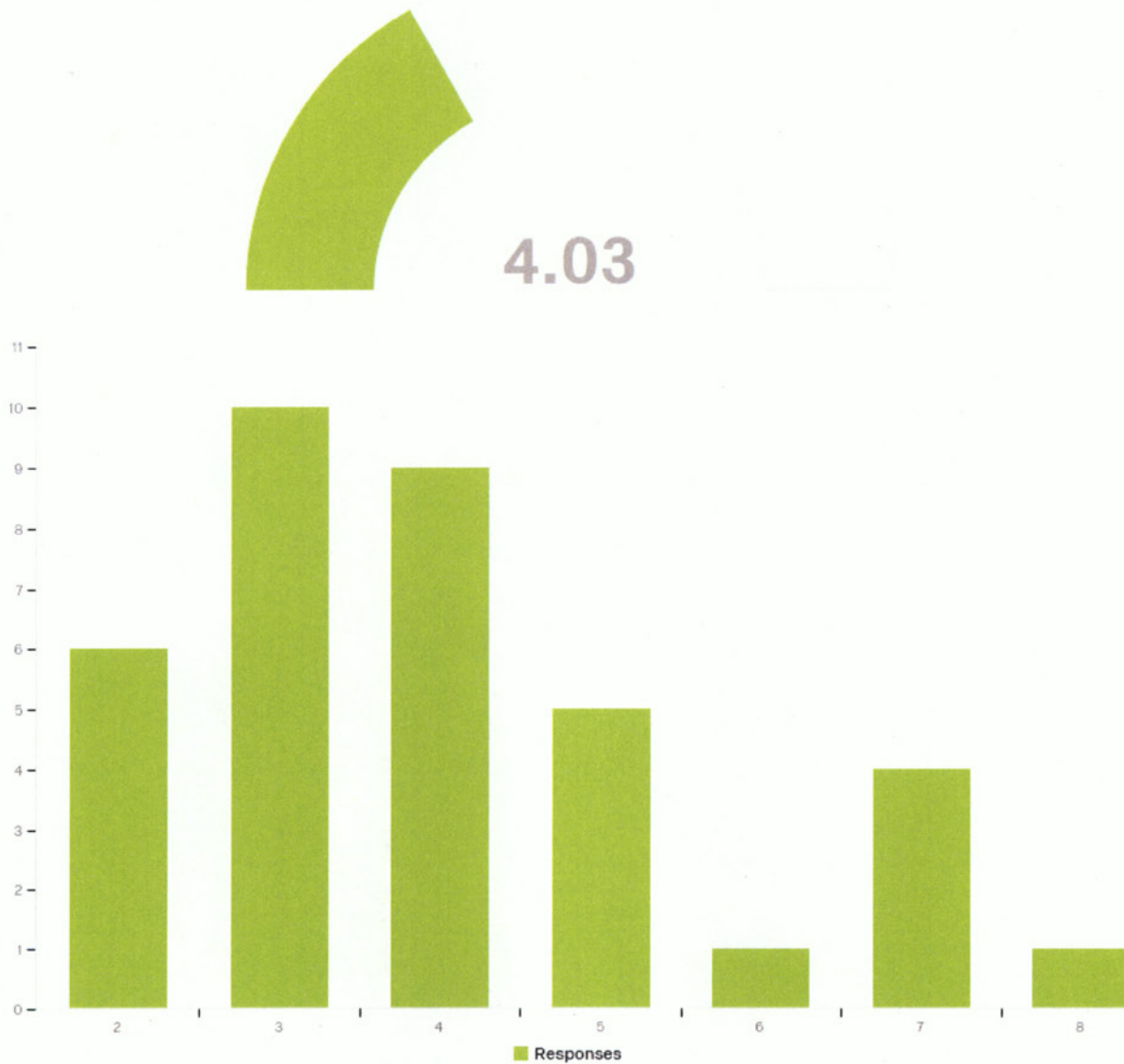
■ Yes (23) ■ No (0) ■ Some do and some don't (13) ■ Unsure (0)



Answer	%	Count
Yes	63.89%	23
No	0.00%	0
Some do and some don't	36.11%	13
Unsure	0.00%	0
Total	100%	36

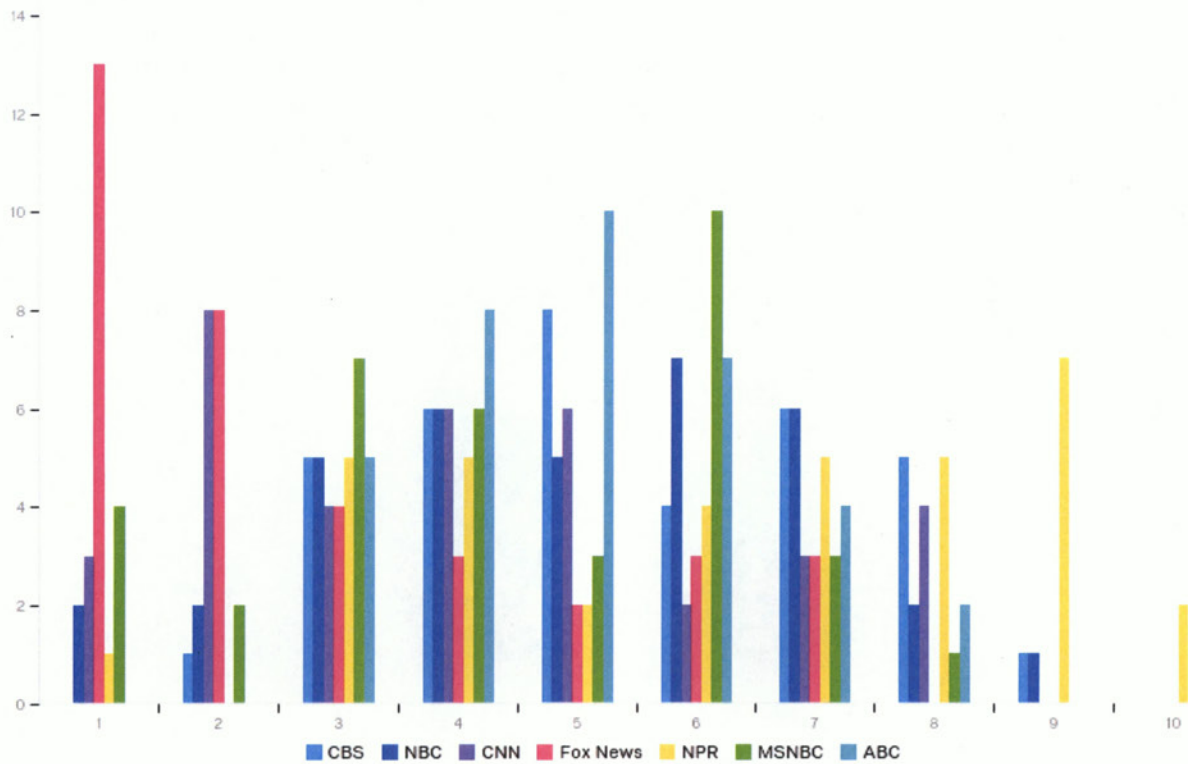
Q6 - On a scale of 1-10, how impartial or unbiased is American network news?

Impartiality of American network news based on average response on a scale from 1 (completely biased) to 10 (completely unbiased)



	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
On a scale of 1-10, how impartial or unbiased is American network news?	2.00	8.00	4.03	1.62	2.64	36

Q7 - Using the same 1-10 scale, rate the bias level of each of these major U.S. news networks:



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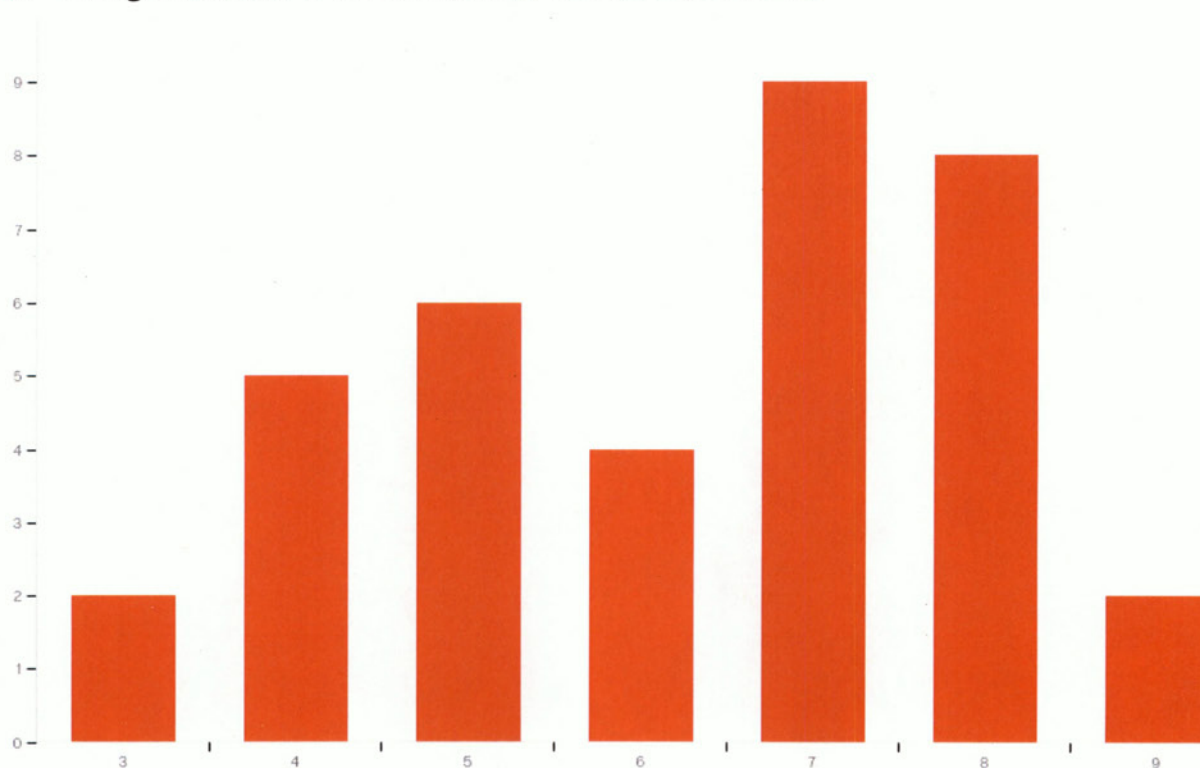
Average rating by respondents



Q7 - Using the same 1-10 scale, rate the bias level of each of these major U.S. news networks:

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
CBS	2.00	9.00	5.44	1.80	3.25
NBC	1.00	9.00	4.97	1.98	3.92
CNN	1.00	8.00	4.17	2.15	4.64
Fox News	1.00	7.00	2.83	2.01	4.03
NPR	1.00	10.00	6.33	2.40	5.78
MSNBC	1.00	8.00	4.36	1.92	3.68
ABC	3.00	8.00	5.08	1.38	1.91

Q8 - Using the same 1-10 scale, how biased is the BBC?



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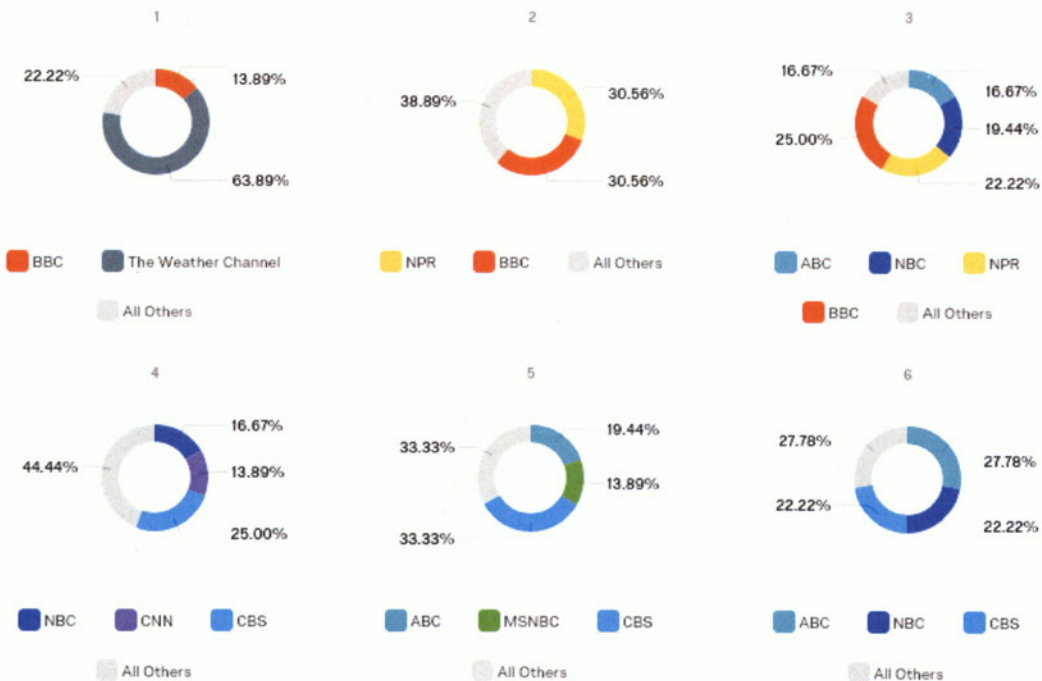
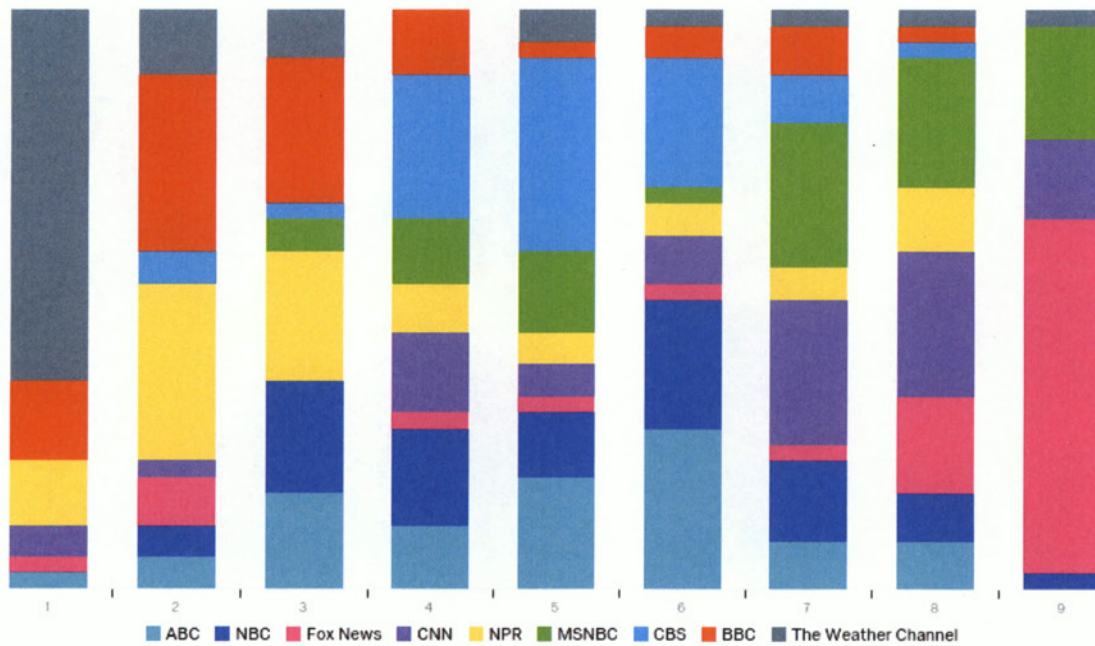
Average rating by respondents between 1 (completely biased) and 10 (completely unbiased)

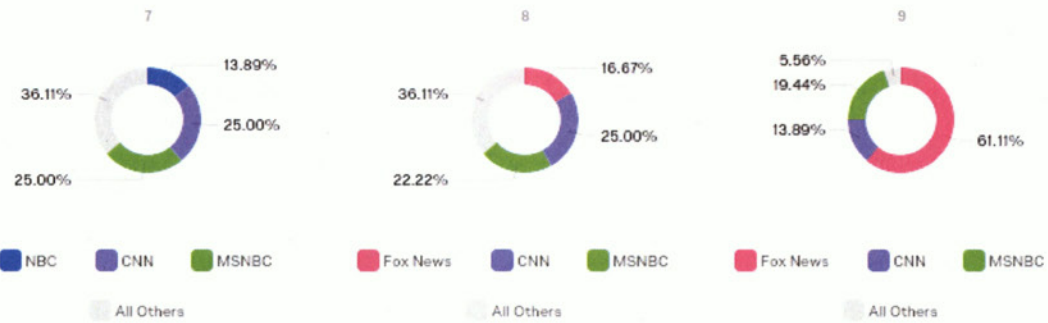


	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Using the same 1-10 scale, how biased is the BBC?	3.00	9.00	6.25	1.67	2.80	36

Q9 - Rank these news outlets from least biased to most biased, with 1 being the least biased and 9 being the most biased: (drag and drop the choices to place them in your order)

Q9 - Rank these news outlets from least biased to most biased, with 1 being the...





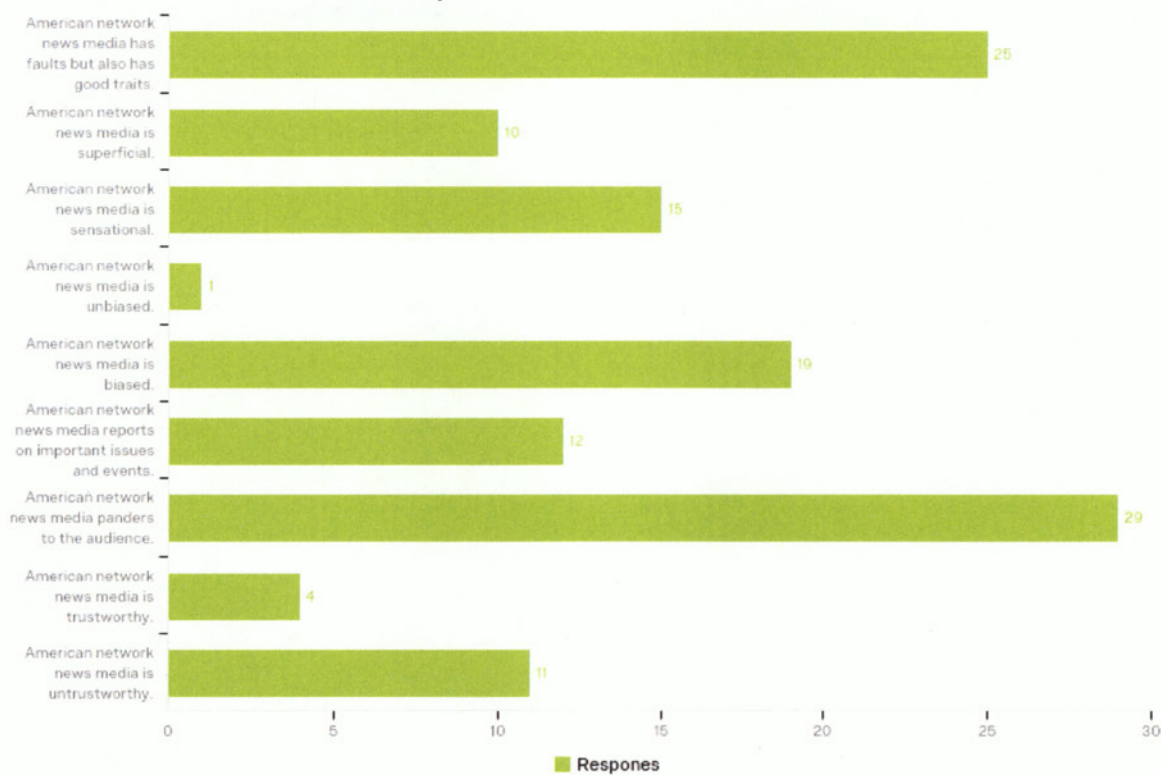
Q9 - Rank these news outlets from least biased to most biased, with 1 being the least biased and 9 being the most biased: (drag and drop the choices to place them in your order)

Rank	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9	
ABC	2.78 %	1	5.56 %	2	16.6 7%	6	11.1 1%	4	19.4 4%	7	27.7 8%	10	8.33 %	3	8.33 %	3	0.00 %	0
NBC	0.00 %	0	5.56 %	2	19.4 4%	7	16.6 7%	6	11.1 1%	4	22.2 2%	8	13.8 9%	5	8.33 %	3	2.78 %	1
Fox ⁶	2.78 %	1	8.33 %	3	0.00 %	0	2.78 %	1	2.78 %	1	2.78 %	1	2.78 %	1	16.6 7%	6	61.1 1%	22
CNN	5.56 %	2	2.78 %	1	0.00 %	0	13.8 9%	5	5.56 %	2	8.33 %	3	25.0 0%	9	25.0 0%	9	13.8 9%	5
NPR	11.1 1%	4	30.5 6%	11	22.2 2%	8	8.33 %	3	5.56 %	2	5.56 %	2	5.56 %	2	11.1 1%	4	0.00 %	0
MSN BC	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	5.56 %	2	11.1 1%	4	13.8 9%	5	2.78 %	1	25.0 0%	9	22.2 2%	8	19.4 4%	7
CBS	0.00 %	0	5.56 %	2	2.78 %	1	25.0 0%	9	33.3 3%	12	22.2 2%	8	8.33 %	3	2.78 %	1	0.00 %	0
BBC	13.8 9%	5	30.5 6%	11	25.0 0%	9	11.1 1%	4	2.78 %	1	5.56 %	2	8.33 %	3	2.78 %	1	0.00 %	0
TWC ⁷	63.8 9%	23	11.1 1%	4	8.33 %	3	0.00 %	0	5.56 %	2	2.78 %	1	2.78 %	1	2.78 %	1	2.78 %	1

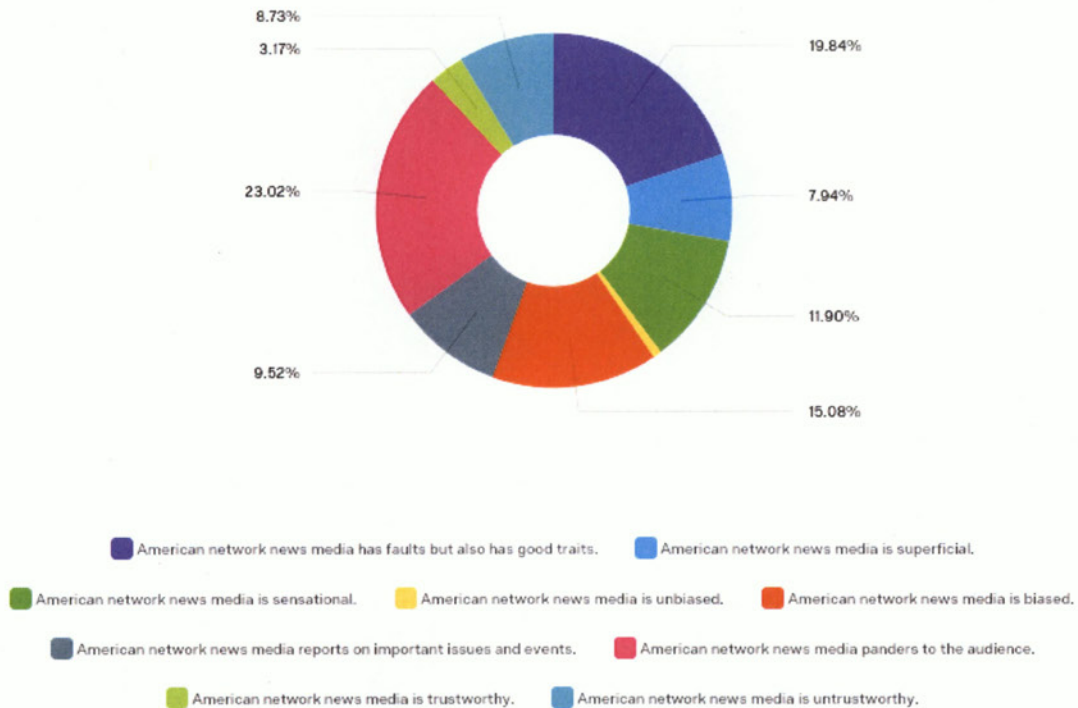
⁶ Fox News shortened to Fox for space

⁷ The Weather Channel abbreviated to TWC

Q10 - Which of the following statements best represents your opinion of American network news media? You may select more than one answer.

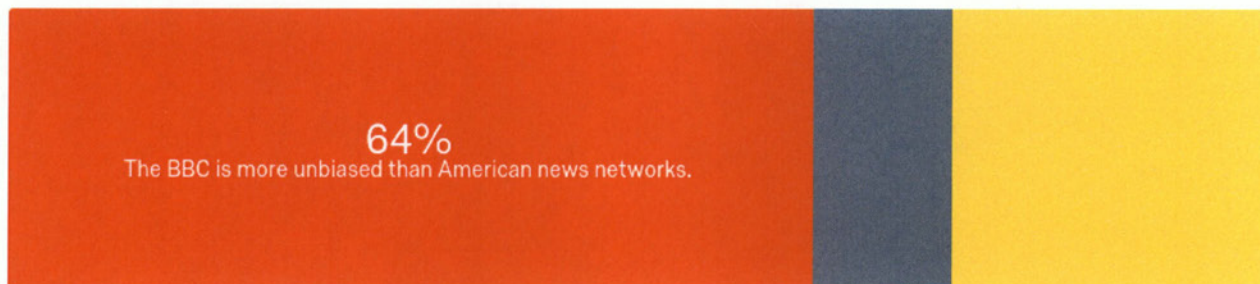
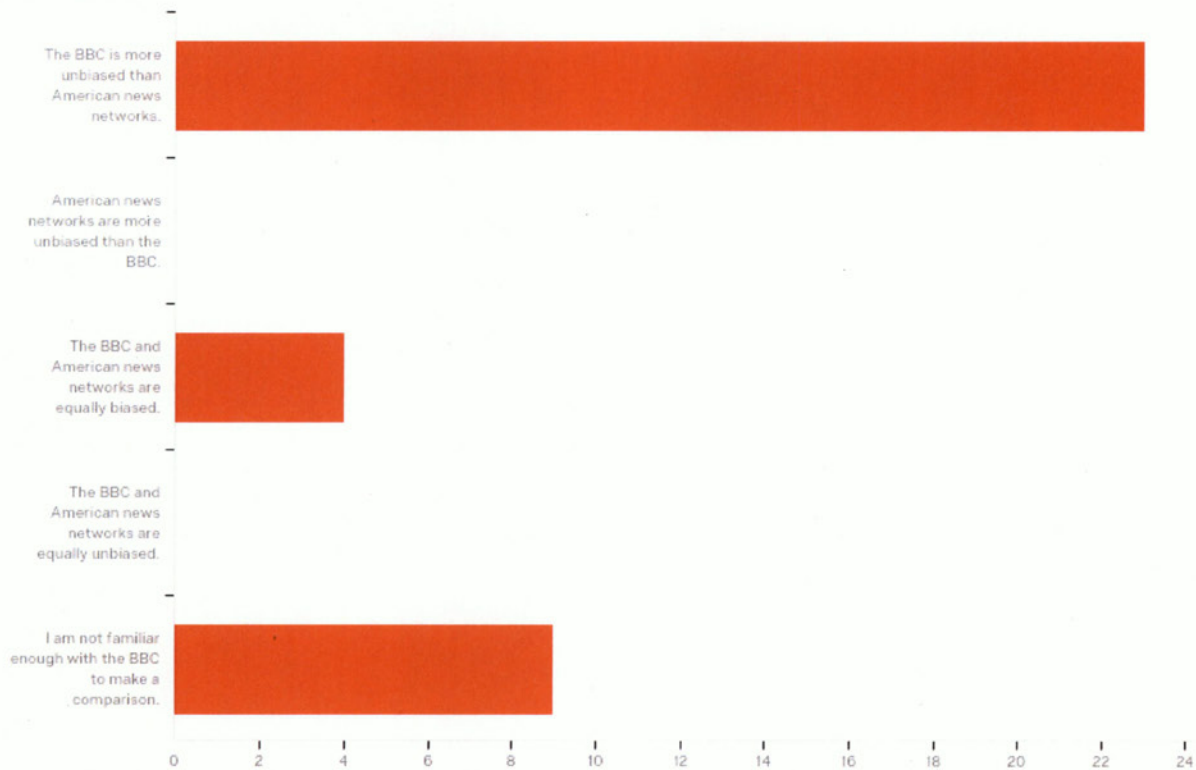


Q10 - Which of the following statements best represents your opinion of American network news media? You may select more than one answer.



Answer	%	Count
American network news media has faults but also has good traits.	69.44%	25
American network news media is superficial.	27.78%	10
American network news media is sensational.	41.67%	15
American network news media is unbiased.	2.78%	1
American network news media is biased.	52.78%	19
American network news media reports on important issues and events.	33.33%	12
American network news media panders to the audience.	80.56%	29
American network news media is trustworthy.	11.11%	4
American network news media is untrustworthy.	30.56%	11
Total	100%	36

Q11 - Compare British news networks, in particular the BBC, to American news networks.

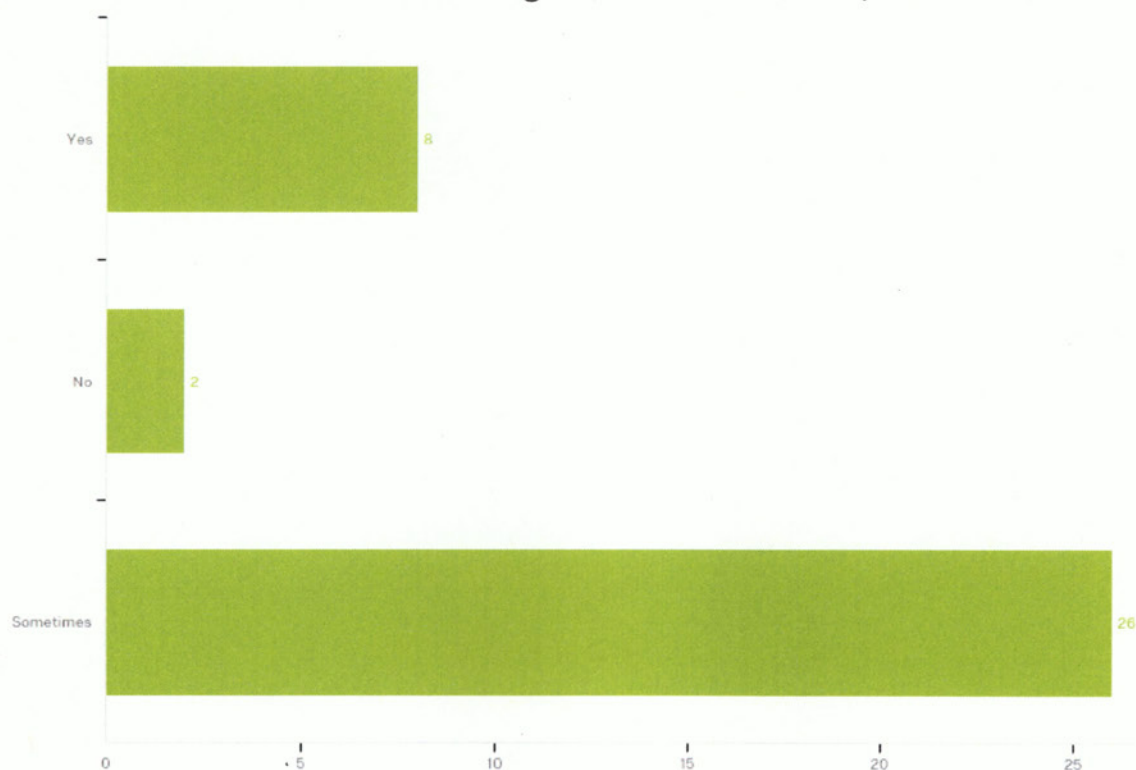


- The BBC is more unbiased than American news networks. (23)
- American news networks are more unbiased than the BBC. (0)
- The BBC and American news networks are equally biased. (4)
- The BBC and American news networks are equally unbiased. (0)
- I am not familiar enough with the BBC to make a comparison. (9)

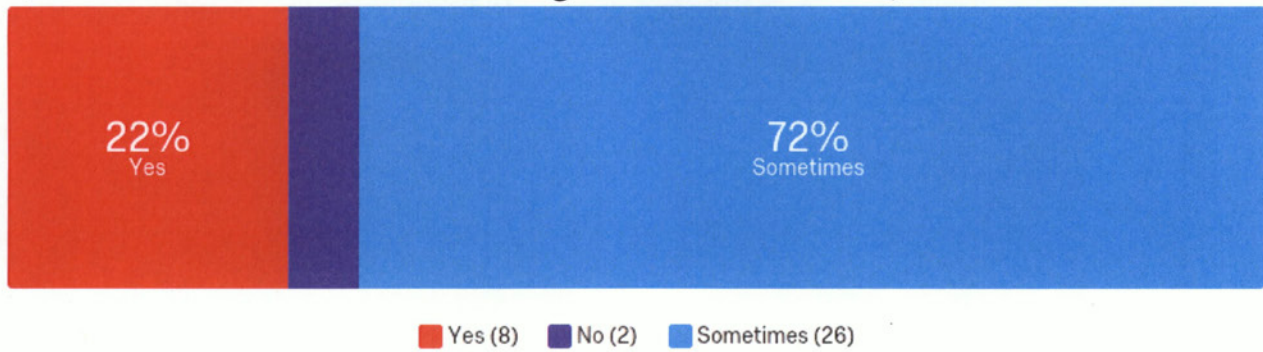
Q11 - Compare British news networks, in particular the BBC, to American news networks.

Answer	%	Count
The BBC is more unbiased than American news networks.	63.89%	23
American news networks are more unbiased than the BBC.	0.00%	0
The BBC and American news networks are equally biased.	11.11%	4
The BBC and American news networks are equally unbiased.	0.00%	0
I am not familiar enough with the BBC to make a comparison.	25.00%	9
Total	100%	36

Q12 - Are American news networks good sources for news/current events?

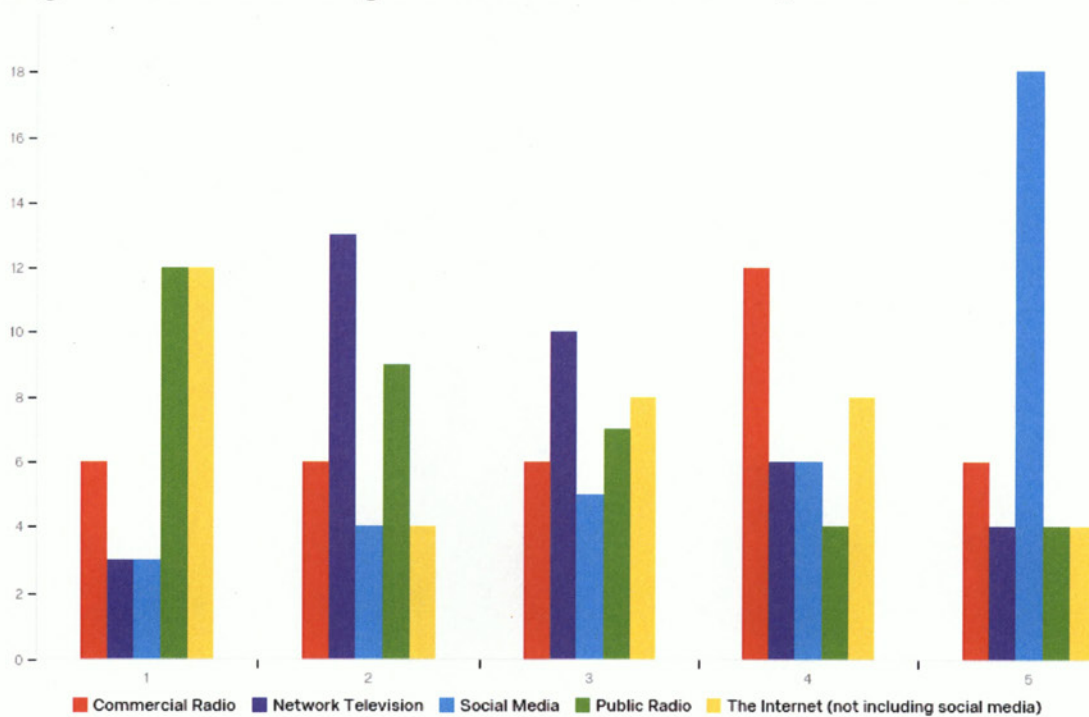


Q12 - Are American news networks good sources for news/current events?



Answer	%	Count
Yes	22.22%	8
No	5.56%	2
Sometimes	72.22%	26
Total	100%	36

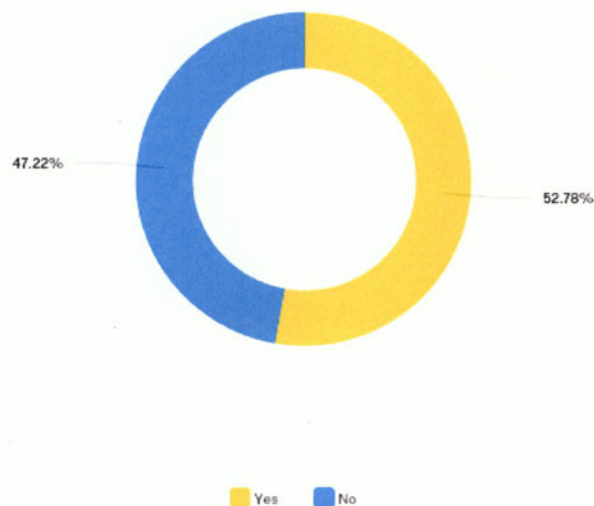
Q13 - Rank the news outlets from best to worst source for news/current events, 1 being the best and 5 being the worst source for news/current events.



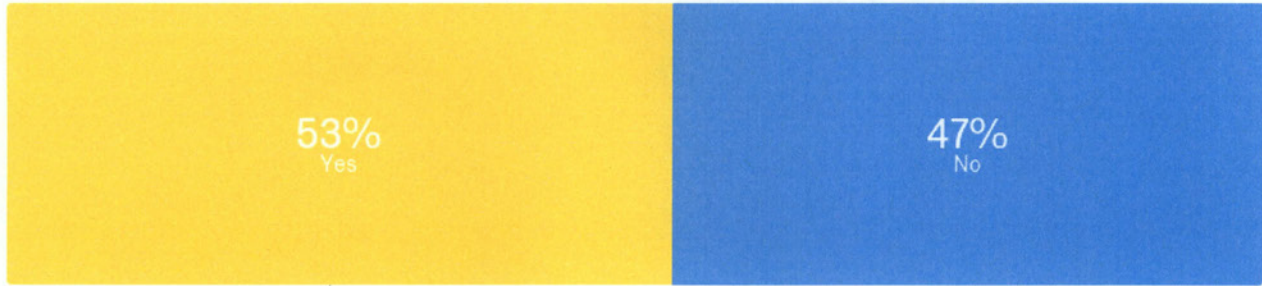
Q13 - Rank the news outlets from best to worst source for news/current events, 1 being the best and 5 being the worst source for news/current events.

Rank	1		2		3		4		5	
Commercial Radio	16.67%	6	16.67%	6	16.67%	6	33.33%	12	16.67%	6
Network Television	8.33%	3	36.11%	13	27.78%	10	16.67%	6	11.11%	4
Social Media	8.33%	3	11.11%	4	13.89%	5	16.67%	6	50.00%	18
Public Radio	33.33%	12	25.00%	9	19.44%	7	11.11%	4	11.11%	4
The Internet (not including social media)	33.33%	12	11.11%	4	22.22%	8	22.22%	8	11.11%	4

Q14 - Do you trust most of what you hear on American news networks?



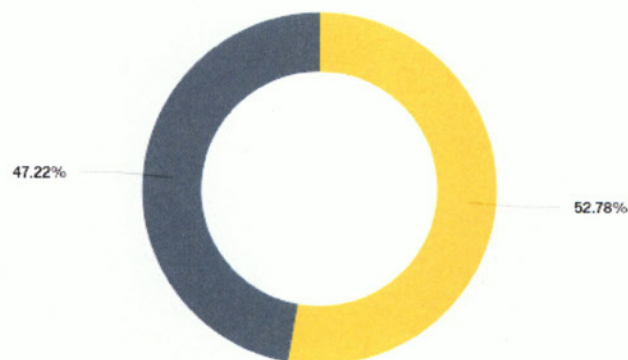
Q14 - Do you trust most of what you hear on American news networks?



Yes (19) No (17)

Answer	%	Count
Yes	52.78%	19
No	47.22%	17
Total	100%	36

Q15 - Do you trust most of what you hear from the BBC?



Yes No I do not get information from the BBC

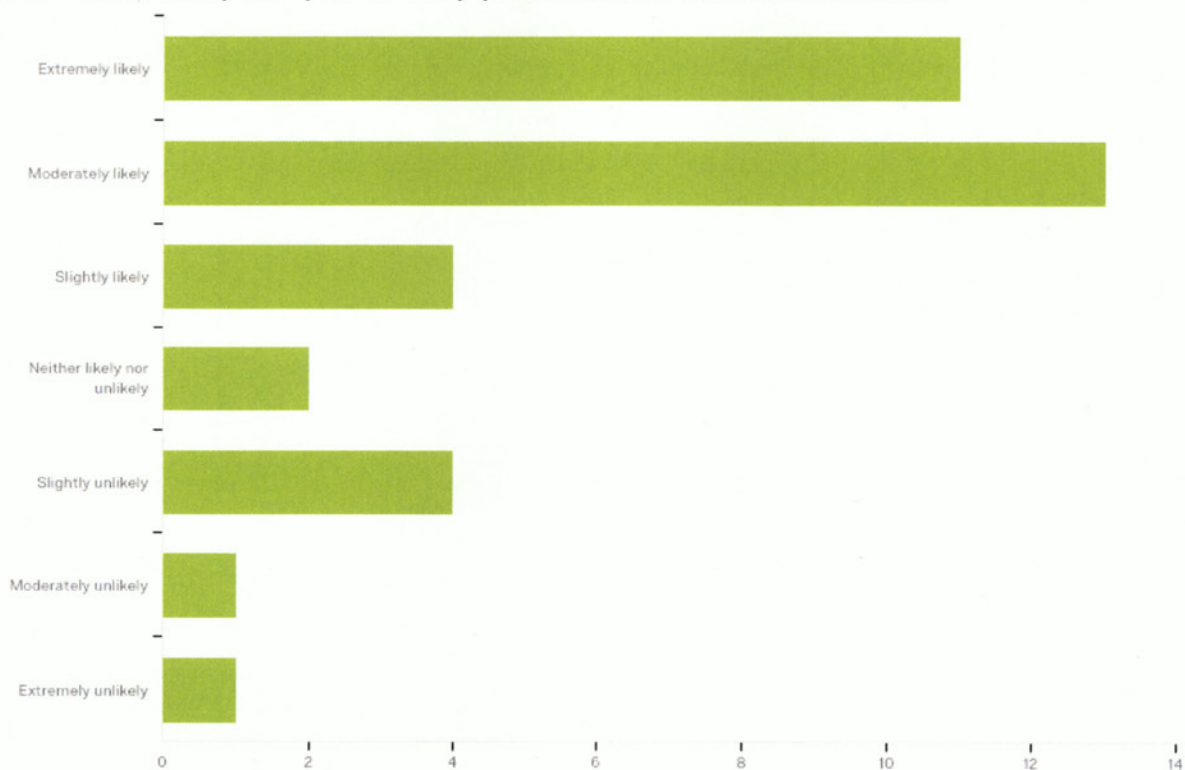
Q15 - Do you trust most of what you hear from the BBC?



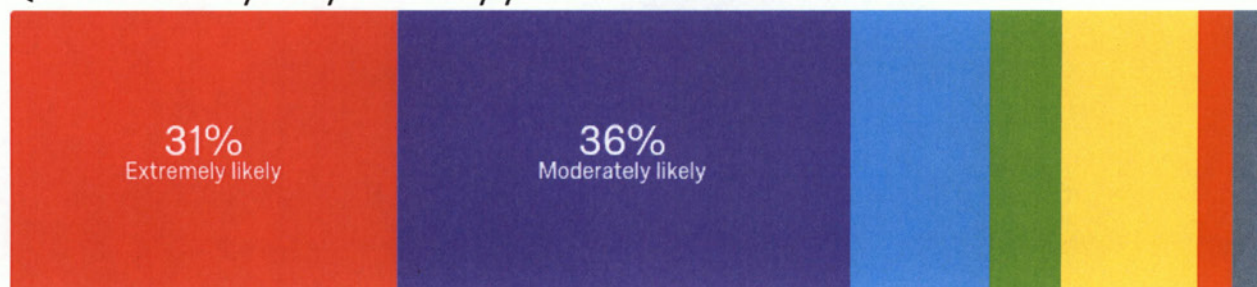
Yes No I do not get information from the BBC

Answer	%	Count
Yes	52.78%	19
No	0.00%	0
I do not get information from the BBC	47.22%	17
Total	100%	36

Q16 - How likely are you to vary your sources of network news?



Q16 - How likely are you to vary your sources of network news?



■ Extremely likely (11)
 ■ Moderately likely (13)
 ■ Slightly likely (4)
 ■ Neither likely nor unlikely (2)
 ■ Slightly unlikely (4)
 ■ Moderately unlikely (1)
 ■ Extremely unlikely (1)

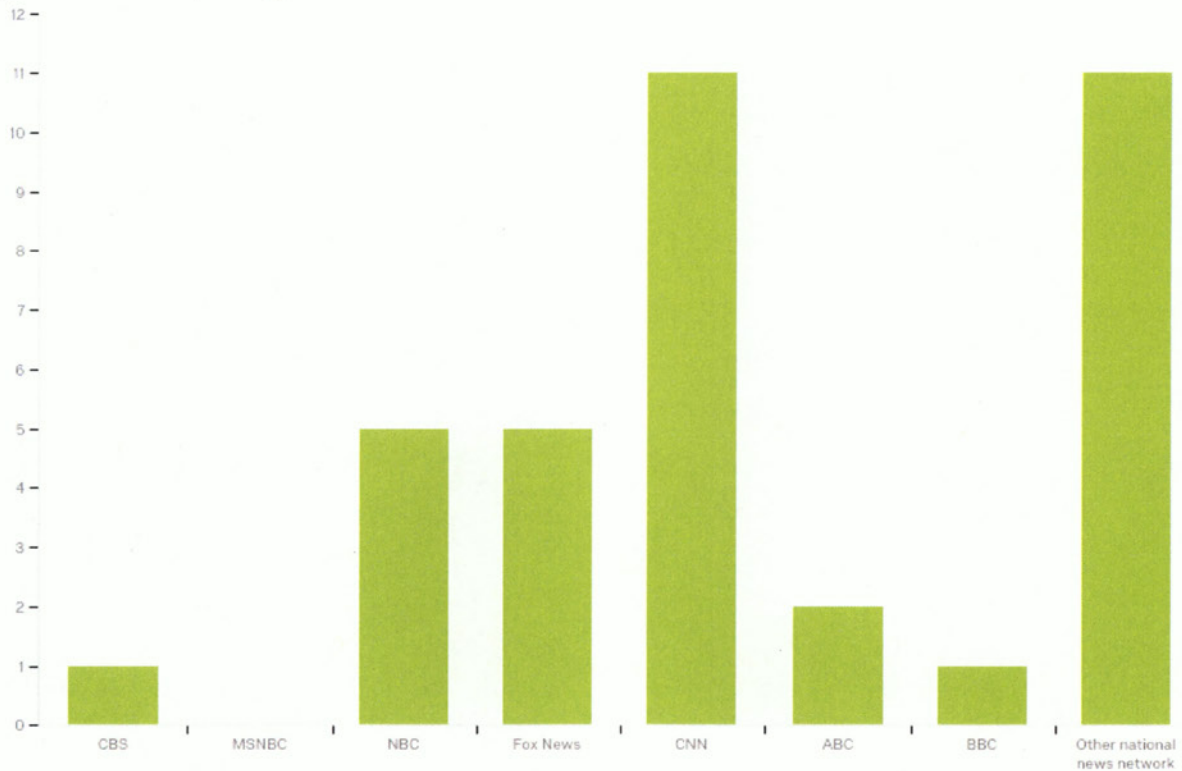
Answer	%	Count
Extremely likely	30.56%	11
Moderately likely	36.11%	13
Slightly likely	11.11%	4
Neither likely nor unlikely	5.56%	2
Slightly unlikely	11.11%	4
Moderately unlikely	2.78%	1
Extremely unlikely	2.78%	1
Total	100%	36

Q17 - What is your go-to network news outlet?



■ CBS (1)
 ■ MSNBC (0)
 ■ NBC (5)
 ■ Fox News (5)
 ■ CNN (11)
 ■ ABC (2)
 ■ BBC (1)
 ■ Other national news network (11)

Q17 - What is your go-to network news outlet?



Answer	%	Count
CBS	2.78%	1
MSNBC	0.00%	0
NBC	13.89%	5
Fox News	13.89%	5
CNN	30.56%	11
ABC	5.56%	2
BBC	2.78%	1
Other national news network	30.56%	11
Total	100%	36

Prior Research from United Kingdom⁸

Research Questions

I hope to learn and understand better exactly how the BBC works as both a concept as well as an institution. More specifically, I want to understand the BBC as a source for news and current events in the United Kingdom.

How does the BBC compare to American media outlets when it comes to how and what is covered and broadcasted?

What can Americans and American media outlets learn from the BBC and how can knowledge of these differences be applied in the United States for media coverage and consumption?

How neutral is the BBC's coverage really? What do British people think?

⁸ Research and analysis was part of a British Cultural Studies project while completing a semester-long study abroad program in the United Kingdom and is a resource consulted while completing this thesis.

Literary Review⁹

The BBC is a uniquely British institution. Its role in British life, society and culture is in its name: The British Broadcasting Corporation. It is the main source information and entertainment for the people of the United Kingdom, and it has taken after its country's imperialistic tendencies branching out to cover current events throughout the world as well as setting up shop in other countries, such as BBC America.

According to the BBC, it a public service organization set up to 'inform, educate and entertain' the public. Published on its website is the list of the BBC's public purposes of which it has five (bbc.co.uk, 2017):

- To provide impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them
- To support learning for people of all ages
- To show the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services
- To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom's nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the United Kingdom
- To reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world

Giving a talk in 2009, Kevin Marsh asked if the BBC's standards of journalism could be applied universally as it is the institution's goal to become the leading provider of

⁹ Note research and analysis conducted at Keele University in Newcastle-under-Lyme, U.K. was formatted in Harvard style referencing.

trustworthy news across the globe (Reuter Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2009).

These standards are based on five values similar to the five purposes of the BBC: truth and accuracy, impartiality, reporting to the public interest, accountability and independence.

Marsh brings up a similar point and asks, “whether trying to promote these values in countries which did not have a tradition of democracy or media freedom would work and indeed whether it could be seen as a form of ‘imperialism’ that involved imposing a western mindset.”

Being that the BBC is a government-set-up institution with these purposes at the forefront, it provides a stark contrast to American cable news media – with its strict separation from the government along with the power coming from the freedom of the press in the first amendment – which has become increasingly polarized no longer attempting to hide its political bias (Crossman, 2014).

American citizens have a virtually endless supply of news outlets. These outlets range from The Economist, NPR and The Washington Post, which are some of the most trusted news sources in the United States, to outlets like Fox News and The Rush Limbaugh Show that are known for their political ideological alignments. However, amongst the most trusted news sources in the U.S. is the BBC, sitting at the top of the list (Mitchell et al., 2014). While the BBC is one of the most diversely trusted sources of political news in the U.S. (diverse in the sense of political ideologies), the same report published by Pew Research Center shows the BBC to have a more liberal-leaning audience than that of NBC News or The Wall Street Journal, which fall more in the middle of the spectrum (although, not perfectly neutral). The report also grouped the BBC with NPR and PBS, which are the

BBC's closest American counterparts, as the most trusted news source for consistently liberal news consumers.

Since media outlets in the United States do not receive funding from the government, these organizations rely on subscriptions or ad revenue in order to sustain their operation and turn a profit (the exception being Public Broadcasting Service, PBS, and outlets of the like, which run on public donations). Because they are not affiliated with the government, American media outlets are not subject to or threatened by looming budget cuts or diversion of funds. This is the issue that could threaten the future of the BBC, according to a report published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in 2014 in reference to the freezing of the BBC license fee and the reallocation of funding (Barwise and Picard, 2014, p. 3):

If this policy continues (or even accelerates, as some are advocating) within a generation the BBC will be reduced to a minor sideshow, the UK equivalent of PBS in America.

The BBC does not operate in the same way that an American media outlet operates. In the United States, journalism produced by, affiliated with or generated by the government is not met with open arms; such as then-governor of Indiana and current U.S. Vice President Mike Pence's failed plan to create a tax-payer-funded and state-run news service in Indiana in 2015 (LoBianco, 2015). Situations like these are seen as conflicts of interest as well as defeating the point and disregarding the role of journalism and the media in the United States, which acts as 'the fourth estate' (referring to its role of keeping the three branches of government in check).

Just as American and British government work differently, so do American media and the BBC. There is reciprocity in the relationship between the BBC and the government of the United Kingdom. As is its purpose, the BBC keeps a watchful eye on the government, but the government simultaneously makes sure that the institution stays true to its mission to educate the public in addition to informing and entertaining. This symbiotic relationship keeps the BBC from producing sensationalized content spreading heavily biased information, which is present in American cable networks and other mainstream media (Engel, 2011).

Questionnaire Results

The questions asked in my questionnaire elicited a variety of responses; some responses were even contradictory. To begin the questionnaire, I started with a bit of 'word association' to learn the subjects' general relationship with the BBC, most people responded with things along the lines of sports, television programs, news or newscast-related programs, and journalism in general. Whether directly or indirectly, every person who was interviewed tied their immediate thoughts of the BBC into other aspects of British culture or British stereotypes.

As for the question of neutrality of the BBC in its coverage of government and politics in the United Kingdom, everyone responded with slightly different variations of the same answer: they do not feel that the BBC is biased, at least not obviously biased. The BBC does well to maintain its impartiality when covering current events and politics. While most of those interviewed have not had much direct interaction with American news media, themes of drama, sensationalism, political bias and Fox News showed the confusing world of mainstream media and cable news that exists in the United States.

It is not a conversation about British culture until the Queen is mentioned. A few times, the Queen's speeches and the 'Queen's English' was cited as what makes the BBC so uniquely British.

Reflection

As an American who has studied journalism in the United States, where we take immense pride in our First Amendment rights, including freedom of speech and the freedom of the press, it is still difficult for me to accept and completely agree with the concept of the main media outlet and news source of the country being regulated by the government, let alone it be a government institution. While my American and journalistic values are still the same, as a result of completing my research and hearing the opinions from my British peers, the BBC as an institution makes more sense to me now. I believe that I can use the knowledge of the way the BBC functions and how it has been successful when I return home and look to begin my career in media.

In the United Kingdom, there are far fewer news and media outlets for people to choose between for their news consumption. This leads to people being forced to listen to perspectives that may be different from their own, thus allowing people to be more informed. With too many choices, many people in the United States only hear what they want to hear because when something comes up that a person does not agree with, he or she can just go someplace else and have his or her own opinions and ideals reaffirmed and reinforced.

It is very interesting to note that one of the most trusted news sources in the United States is not even an American media outlet but is British. However, this finding does not surprise me. I have produced multiple radio and television news broadcasts at my home university, and aside from when I am looking for local and state news stories, I often find myself looking through The Guardian's website for U.S. and world news. Aside from less

sensationalized and more neutrally aligned coverage of current events provided by the BBC and other British news sources, news American news consumer hear what is happening in the world or in the United States from an outside perspective. This is helpful because it is difficult to see the storm when you are standing in the eye of the hurricane.

I think an overlooked aspect of the BBC is the lack or minimal use of advertisements during its programs. Television ads in the United States are seeming to lose their effectiveness more and more record shows and watch them later or stop paying for cable in exchange for Netflix subscriptions and the like. The BBC may have to worry about have its budget redirected, but American television is having a hard time keeping up with changes in viewing patterns.

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Questionnaire and Responses¹⁰

The BBC Questionnaire

1. *What is the main thing that you associate with the BBC?*

- **R1:** EastEnders because it's one of the most popular TV shows on television. And 24-hour news channel, which is always up-to-date with new stories.
- **R2:** The several types of programs broadcasted on TV.
- **R3:** The news.
- **R4:** TV that doesn't have adverts and also football coverage.
- **R5:** The British dramas that it creates that have become a staple into British Society.
- **R6:** The news and topical, mainstream television shows such as Dr. Who, Sherlock and others shows.
- **R7:** Good journalism, the quality and delivery.
- **R8:** News and weather, as this is main news source and is reliable
- **R9:** BBC sport and watching the news.
- **R10:** BBC One the TV channel and BBC Radio One.

2. *Does the BBC being a part of a government department create a conflict of interest when covering British politics?*

- **R1:** The BBC is predominantly left-wing and the stories are not always positive about the left-wing beliefs. They offer both sides, which is democratic.
- **R2:** The BBC usually appears to be neutral on controversial subjects, the BBC doesn't seem to push any particular opinion onto people.
- **R3:** The BBC can often be biased towards a political party and towards political conflicts.

¹⁰ Responses containing personal experience or information have been omitted for privacy.

- **R5:** The BBC has always been a taxpayer funded institution but it has always been, to the best part impartial. The BBC have a programme called Points of View in which members of the public can discuss issues with the shows of that week and any complaints. When covering politics, the BBC does give equal airtime to each party for their 'party political broadcast', which normally last roughly 5 minutes each election cycle. However, certain programmes do lend themselves to bias with the presenters however it is balanced out with the guests.
- **R6:** To some extent. They cover the news with a political interest, which often aligns with the dominant or often right wing views. Such as recent coverage of the general election, Jeremy Corbyn and Theresa May.
- **R7:** There could be a bias towards the party in power as their funding comes from central government.
- **R8:** It is one of the more unbiased sources.
- **R9:** No. They seem to have a fair reflection of all parties and policies.
- **R10:** The BBC would need to cover any British political issues in a favourable way for the British government.

3. Is the BBC truly impartial or unbiased?

- **R1:** Some instances can be unbiased. The coverage and demonization of President Trump is not necessarily fair for the systems of politics within the UK. We have a far-right movement too and some of their beliefs are demonized too despite being under the influence of democracy.
- **R2:** It would be entirely impossible for the BBC to be completely unbiased. There is a wide variety of different platforms that the BBC broadcasts on and clearly each individual will have their own opinion on subjects.
- **R3:** It is impossible to see how the BBC can be truly impartial.
- **R4:** I don't think it will ever be truly unbiased purely because of where the funding is coming from.
- **R5:** 100% no. Based on the fact that no one ever is truly impartial or truly unbiased.

- **R6:** No, it cannot be as it is a faction of the government. As the nations primary news source, it is used to control the majority of media we see. The coverage of this media however, is often relatively fair.
- **R7:** The BBC is under such close scrutiny that it cannot afford to be biased.
- **R9:** There is a fair reflection of all parties when it comes to politics, and it usually has at least two people with different views when talking about a particular debate, whether it be politics or another subject.
- **R10:** The BBC could never be truly unbiased. It is too big and influential with powerful links that it much keeps in its favour.

4. What do you associate with American news media (i.e. NBC, ABC, CNN, Fox News, NPR, etc.)?

- **R1:** I don't particularly pay attention to American news coverage. Fox news gets a bad press in the UK.
- **R3:** I am pretty unaware of US news media.
- **R6:** It is very over the top and very commercialised. There seems to be a lot of advertising compared to the UK. There also seems to be a lot more debate from panellists and guests compared to the UK.
- **R5:** American news media is inherently corrupt, and this is solely responsible for the polarized state of the country at the moment. The trends and correlations between voter identity and what stations they are exposed to make it blatantly clear. Even those who are meant to be "centrist" are clearly liberal organized, and this is made evident when you look at those who run the organizations like NBC and ABC.
- **R6:** It is far more politically aligned, with certain channels reporting incidents and political information in line with their views. Such as Fox News reporting news in support of Trump.
- **R7:** Sports and Weather. Cable news media sensationalizes "if it bleeds it leads" and the quality is reduced by the need for 24hr news.
- **R8:** It seems very showbiz.
- **R9:** It can be quite prejudiced towards ethnic minorities and/or homosexuals.

5. *How does US television news coverage compare to that of the BBC?*

- **R1:** American news is over-elaborate in comparison to the BBC. They dramatize and hype up things more than the BBC. But the BBC is a corporate company with multiple platforms and goes beyond the powers of a normal news station.
- **R2:** News coverage in America is significantly more neutral than the BBC, where the BBC would talk about controversial subjects; some news stations in America would avoid it.
- **R3:** The US tends to over dramatize news much more than the UK.
- **R6:** The BBC has more credible news coverage and far less bias than the US channels.
- **R7:** American news is more personalized, the coverage is more about the person rather than policy.
- **R8:** American news clips seem quite biased on what they are reporting on.
- **R9:** The BBC are more fair, and cover more stories from around the world.
- **R10:** US TV news seems to cover more political issues than the BBC.

6. *Is the BBC a good source for news/current events? Rank it compared to other news sources in the UK.*

- **R1:** Yes, I regularly keep updated by BBC news more than any other news platform. I would rank it at the top.
- **R2:** It is a good source for news and it is usually the place I look if I want to find out more about a current event. I'd rank the BBC near the top, with Sky News.
- **R3:** The BBC is the first news channel I would go to, TV and online, to find out the local news. The coverage and speed of the BBC news is very quick after events have occurred.
- **R5:** The BBC is a good source.

- **R6:** It probably ranks about 8 or 9 out of 10 due to the credibility of its news coverage. While it fails in being entirely neutral, what it does cover is current and well sourced, as it must be held to the public's scrutiny if incorrect.
- **R7:** I would rank it below the wire services (Reuters etc.) but above the broadsheet newspapers.
- **R9:** I would rank it top in the UK, it is my go to news channel and news website.
- **R10:** I think so. The BBC is well known and reliable. I prefer the BBC to other news sources, e.g. ITV, Channel 4, Daily Mail, etc.